

Message Text

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PAGE 01 AMMAN 02223 261636Z

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7683

S E C R E T AMMAN 2223

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR,SY, IS, UNDOF, XF

SUMMARY: RIFAI THINKS SYRIANS WILL RENEW UNDOF MANDATE.
PROBLEM IS STILL FINDING A FACE SAVER. RIFAI LEFT ME
WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT ASAD BADLY WANTS TO RENEW, HAS
NOT YET FOUND A FORMULA, AND IS LOOKING FORWARD TO MEETING
WITH KING HUSSEIN MAY 4 TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE FURTHER.
END SUMMARY.

1. RIFAI TOLD ME APRIL 26 THAT IT WAS HIS IMPRESSION
THAT, FOLLOWING HIS RECENT TALK WITH ASAD ASAD WANTED TO FIND
A WAY TO RENEW UNDOF MANDATE. RIFAI TOLD ASAD THAT
JORDANIANS HAD INFORMED THE PRESIDENT IT WAS THEIR
VIEW THAT PRESIDENT ASAD WANTED TO RENEW THE MANDATE
BUT BADLY NEEDED SOME KIND OF FACE SAVER TO DO SO. HE
SAID ASAD DID NOT OBJECT TO THIS SUMMATION.

2.I PRESSED RIFAI ON WHAT KIND OF ARRANGEMENTS ASAD
MIGHT ACCEPT. RIFAI SAID "WELL WE SUGGESTED A NUMBER
OF THESE TO YOU." I TOLD RIFAI THAT HE SHOULD KNOW
THAT THE U.S. WAS NOT GOING TO TURN AROUND AND ACCEPT
THE RESOLUTION WHICH WE VETOED IN JANUARY. THIS WAS
THE KIND OF CONFRONTATION OVER THE ISSUE WHICH WE
SHOULD AVOID AND WHICH WOULD JUST MAKE MATTERS
WORSE. IT WAS LIKE ASKING ASAD RIGHT NOW TO TURN AROUND AND
PATCH THINGS UP WITH SADAT OR WITH THE IRAQIS.
IT IS SOMETHING THAT COULD NOT BE DONE.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 AMMAN 02223 261636Z

3. RIFAI SAID HE ACCEPTED THAT POINT. PERHAPS THERE WOULD BE AN IRAQI CRISIS. IRAQ HAD CUT OFF ITS CRUDE OIL SUPPLY TO SYRIA. THERE WAS SOME INFORMATION THAT IRAQ WAS MASSING TROOPS IN INTS BORDER WITH SYRIA POSSIBLY OUT OF FEAR OF A SYRIAN RIPOSTE FOR THE IRAQI OIL CUTOFF. MAYBE THE RIAQI EXCUSE COULD BE DUG UP AGAIN. RIFAI ALSO MENTIONED THAT MAYBE ASAD COULD RELY ON THE LEBANESE SITUATION TO AFFECT A RENEWAL. HE HOPED THAT ASAD COULD AT THE TIME OF THE RENEWAL ALSO CLAIM SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE IN LEBANON TO PERMIT THE RENEWAL TO TAKE PLACE.

4. RIFAI SAYS KING HUSSEIN WILL BE VISITING ASAD IN DAMASCUS IN THE FIRST WEEK IN MAY, POSSIBLY MAY 4, AND THE MANDATE RENEWAL WILL BE A SUBJECT OF CONVERSATION AT THAT TIME.

5. SUGGEST DEPARTMENT PASS DAMASCUS.
PICKERING

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